

*An Officer and a Gentleman: Transformations
in the Iconography of a Warrior Saint*

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ONE OF THE DISTINCTIVE features of Byzantine art over the course of its history is its consistency in adhering to set portrait types of the saints.¹ No informed viewer could have any difficulty identifying St. Peter in the famous early Byzantine icon at Sinai, for example, even without the help of the rather summarily rendered keys held in the figure's right hand (fig. 1).² Despite the icon's lacking the inscription that forms almost a *sine qua non* of post-Iconoclastic Byzantine painting, the portrait type of the saint is so well defined and consistent over the course of the artistic production of Byzantium that one needs no further clues than the facial features to recognize the image as that of St. Peter. In late antiquity, St. Menas, the great martyr of Egypt, possessed an equally recognizable portrait type. In works from the fifth through the seventh centuries, Menas is consistently represented as an *orant* between two kneeling camels (fig. 2). He appears beardless, with curly hair, and wears military dress consisting of a short, belted tunic with a mantle fastened at the shoulder. This iconography is repeated in hundreds of representations, including pilgrims' ampullae, ivories, and stone reliefs.³ How surprising it is, then, to encounter the thirteenth-century fresco of St. Menas at Sopoćani in Serbia (fig. 3).⁴ There he appears as an older man, with gray, curly hair and a rounded gray beard. His dress, too, is far more distinguished than the rough-and-ready short tunic that featured in his early iconography. At Sopoćani, Menas wears a long, aquamarine tunic, trimmed with gold. Over his shoulder is fastened a rose-colored cloak bearing a large rectangular *tablion*, the ornamental panel worn by persons of rank. Within this gold-embroidered ornament is the bust-length image of Christ blessing.

This later image of St. Menas raises a number of critical questions. Why should St. Menas, unlike other saints popular in both the early and later phases of Byzantine civilization, have undergone such a pro-

1 On the dynamics of holy portraiture in Byzantium, see H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1996).

2 K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Icons* (Princeton, 1976), pl. IX.

3 K. Weitzmann et al., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 573–79,

cat. nos. 512, 514, 515, 516, 517; W. Braunfels, ed., *LChriI* 8:4–7. The Louvre's panel painting with Christ and Apa Mena from Bawit represents a homonymous abbot of the monastery, not the martyr saint. Cf. *Age of Spirituality*, 552–53, cat. no. 497.

4 V. Djurić, *Sopoćani* (Belgrade, 1963), 125, pl. LIII.



Fig. 1 Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine, icon of St. Peter, 7th century (photo reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan—Princeton—Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)

Fig. 2 Paris, Louvre, terra cotta ampulla from shrine of St. Menas, late 5th or early 6th century (photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux)



found transformation of his portrait type? What does the change in his costume signify? What motivated the introduction of the image of Christ on his cloak, and what does this innovation reveal about the meaning and status of such an image? I argue that the altered image of St. Menas in later Byzantine art is evidence of the refashioning of an early Byzantine saint by a later and very different phase of the culture. Through the saint's images and the various redactions of his life produced over several centuries, we can witness the transformation of Menas from the popular hero of the provinces into a noble protector for a much-reduced empire. In an era dominated by the culture of the imperial court, Byzantine art reshaped Menas's image to conform to its new context. The introduction of the image of Christ to the saint's iconography and the variations in its rendering reveal a pattern of permeability between imperial and ecclesiastical realms—as between the earthly and heavenly—that, with accelerating intensity, marked the art of Byzantium from the eleventh century onward.

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Fig. 3 St. Menas. Church of the Trinity, Sopoćani (photo: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia)



St. Menas in Late Antiquity

Few saints attained such widespread popularity in the early Byzantine period as the Egyptian martyr St. Menas, whose shrine, Abū Mīnā on Lake Mareotis, some forty-three kilometers southwest of Alexandria, was a major pilgrimage site in late antiquity.⁵ His image and the power of his relics were diffused throughout the Mediterranean world through the myriad terra-cotta flasks manufactured at his shrine. The excavated finds at Abū Mīnā include the molds of such flasks, meant to contain holy water or oil from the shrine bearing the εὐλογία τοῦ ἁγίου Μηνᾶ.⁶ Although the size and decoration of the ampullae vary, the iconographic type of Menas that appears on them is the same: a young man, orant, flanked by two camels who bend their necks to the ground at his feet.⁷ The consistent appearance of this image on the flasks and other media has led to the conclusion that the prototype was at the shrine itself.⁸

Details in the vita of St. Menas help account for the ubiquity of the prostrate camels in the iconography of the saint, but whether the text explains a preexisting image or motivates the creation of new iconography is a matter of conjecture. What is clear is that the vita and the images reinforce one another. In fact, the way the motif of the camels appears repeatedly under various guises in the accounts of the saint's translation to Mareotis suggests a dialogue between the evolving text and works of art. In the Latin life of St. Menas edited by Mombricitus in the fifteenth century (*BHL* 5921), which Delehaye believed to reflect a relatively early Greek original, the saint directs that his decapitated body be placed on a camel and driven away until the animal should stop at the spot appointed by God for his burial. Menas's followers obey his instructions, and the camel laden with

5 The early twentieth-century excavations of the site were published in a series of major works by C. M. Kaufmann including *Die Ausgrabung der Menas-Heiligtümer in der Mareotiswüste* (Cairo, 1906–8), *Das Menastempel und die Heiligtümer von Karm Abu Mina in der Mariütwüste* (Frankfurt am Main, 1909), and *Die Menasstadt und das Nationalheiligtum der altchristlichen Aegypten in der westalexandrinischen Wüste* (Leipzig, 1910). The published reports of the recent reexcavation of the site now include P. Grossmann, *Abū Mīnā*, vol. 1, *Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* (Mainz, 1989) and vol. 2, *Das Baptisterium* (Mainz, 2004). The monograph on Menas's cult by R. Miedema, *De heilige Menas* (Rotterdam, 1913), has been rendered obsolete by the extensive publication of physical and textual evidence unavailable to

him, while the recent book by D. Theocharis, *Μηνᾶς ὁ μεγαλομάρτυς: Ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ μεγάλου Κάστρου* (Herakleion, 1995) is concerned primarily with the post-Byzantine period.

6 C. M. Kaufmann, *Zur Ikonographie der Menas-Ampullen* (Cairo, 1910), 153, pl. 72; C. Metzger, *Les ampoules à eulogie du Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1981), 9–11, figs. 10–63. The stratigraphically controlled excavations at Kôm el-Dikka near Alexandria yielded ampullae with imputed dates of ca. 480 to ca. 650, that is, up to the Arab conquest of Alexandria. Z. Kiss, *Les ampoules de Saint Ménas découvertes à Kôm el-Dikka (1961–1981)* (Warsaw, 1989), 14–18.

7 Kaufmann, *Menas-Ampullen*, 104; P. Chaîne, “Note sur les animaux de saint Ménas,” *ROC* (1908): 212–18; Metzger, *Ampoules à eulogie*, 10.

8 On the possible relationship between pilgrim tokens and monumental art at their shrine of origin, see G. Vikan, “Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Devotionalia as Evidence of the Appearance of Pilgrimage Shrines,” in *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn, 1991* (Bonn, 1995), 1:377–88; on the hypothesized cult image of Menas at the shrine, see Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 573–74, no. 512 (n. 3 above); K. Wessel, *Koptische Kunst: Die Spätantike in Ägypten* (Recklinghausen, 1963), 18; Grossmann, *Abū Mīnā*, 1:216 (n. 5 above).

his body is, accordingly, led over hill and dale by the angel of the Lord until it stops at the future site of the saint's shrine.⁹ The topos of the beasts of burden that refuse to budge once they reach the place fated for the enshrinement of a saint's relics is one familiar to students of both Greek and Latin hagiography, although in no other case does it seem to have had such an impact on the saint's image.¹⁰ Possibly, however, this story is the source of the motif of the bending camels, especially since such animals continually brought pilgrims to the shrine. On the other hand, a Coptic account of the translation of Menas's relics, based on a composition postdating the Arab conquest of Egypt, introduces details that seem inspired by images of the saint.¹¹ There is the curious appearance, in the context of the passage of the saint's relics from Phrygia to Alexandria, of sea monsters with long necks and camel-like heads that emerge from the water alongside the boat. These creatures attempt to feed on the crew, but flames emanating from the corpse of St. Menas drive them back into the depths.¹² Delehaye makes the reasonable suggestion that this portion of the text may reflect a misunderstanding of the image of the camels, which are often rendered quite crudely on the mass-produced ampullae from the shrine (fig. 4).¹³

Still more intriguing (if less colorful) is the detail found a bit further along in the same account of Menas's relics. After failing to move the body of St. Menas back to Phrygia on camelback—repeating the immovable pack-animal topos—the prefect Athanasios, who had charge of the body, buried it there at Mareotis in Egypt. For the tomb he had an image made, a wooden relief of St. Menas in the guise of a soldier, with images of camels—or, as the Coptic text insists, sea monsters resembling camels—in adoration at his feet.¹⁴ The introduction



Fig. 4 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, terra cotta ampulla from Shrine of St. Menas, ca. 610–50 (photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1927 [27.94.19] All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

9 Bonitius Mombritius, *Sanctuarium seu Vitae sanctorum* (Milan, ante-1480, repr. Paris, 1910), 2:286–89; the same Latin text is printed in Kaufmann, *Menas-Ampullen*, 49–55. H. Delehaye, “L’invention des reliques de Saint Ménas à Constantinople,” *AB* 29 (1910): 122–23.

10 For a variety of examples of the theme, see H. Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques*, 3rd ed., SubsHag 18 (Brussels, 1927), 35–37. Relic-bearing camels feature in the miracles of SS. Abirou and Atoum, cited by M. Murray, “St. Menas of Alexandria,” *Proceedings of the*

Society of Biblical Archaeology 29 (1907): 29.

11 J. Drescher, “St. Menas’ Camels Once More,” *BSAC* 7 (1941): 24–25. Drescher’s Coptic text comes from Pierpont Morgan Library, Coptic MS 590, a manuscript of the ninth century. The encomium from which it is taken is attributed to the patriarch John III (681–689) or John IV (775–789). The full encomium is printed in idem, *Apa Mena: A Selection of Coptic Texts Relating to St. Menas* (Cairo, 1946), 35–72 (text) and 126–49 (trans.). A parallel Ethiopian text is found in Paris, BN, MS d’Abbadie 92, fols. 128r–129r,

cited in Chaine, “Note sur les animaux,” 213, 216–17.

12 Delehaye, “Invention des reliques,” 124; Drescher, “St. Menas’ Camels,” 24–25.

13 Delehaye, “Invention des reliques,” 124 n. 1; compare the examples in Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 576, cat. no. 515; Metzger, *Ampoules à eulogie*, fig. 43 (n. 6 above).

14 Delehaye, “Invention des reliques,” 125; Drescher, “St. Menas’ Camels,” 25–27.

of a cult image to the text of the encomium helps to rationalize the uniformity of the images on the ampullae distributed from his shrine. Whether or not we accept the pre-Constantinian date of the cult icon that the vita implies, its appearance in the later textual tradition amply demonstrates that artistic depictions of the saint impacted the text of the life.

It is clear, then, that there is a close, even reciprocal, connection between the images of St. Menas in early Byzantine art and the texts of his life. Such dynamic interaction among an important saint's pilgrimage shrine, images, relics, and written life and miracles has been the subject of much recent study, particularly for the two Saints Symeon Stylites and the other great martyr-cult of the early Byzantine world, that of St. Demetrios of Thessalonike.¹⁵ Unlike the Thessalonican cult, which continued to flourish under Byzantine rule after Iconoclasm, the shrine of St. Menas at Mareotis was largely isolated from the mainstreams of Byzantine civilization after the seventh century, both by the schism between the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches and by the Islamic conquest of Egypt.¹⁶ The cult of St. Menas, however, had already engaged the Christian world far beyond the Alexandrian desert, as the distribution of his ampullae prove.¹⁷ The middle-Byzantine figure of St. Menas, severed from his shrine and cult in Egypt, emerges already transformed from a local wonder-worker to a universal helper of the faithful. As Delehayé long ago pointed out, the transfer of the saint's relics to Constantinople was an ideological prerequisite to this transformation. Accordingly, accounts of such a translation, historical or not,

15 Stylites: see, inter alia, G. Vikan, "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium," *DOP* 38 (1984): 65–86, and "Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium," in *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions*, Studies in the History of Art 20 (Washington, DC, 1989), 47–59, esp. 55–57. Demetrios: C. Bakirtzis, "Le culte de Saint Démétrius," *Akten des XII. internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie, Bonn, 1991* (Bonn, 1995), 1:58–68; idem, "Byzantine Ampullae from Thessaloniki," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout (Urbana–Chicago, 1990), 140–49; R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (New York, 1985), 50–94; idem, "The Mosaic Decoration of St. Demetrios, Thessaloniki: A Re-Examination in the Light of the Drawings of W. S. George," *BSA* 64 (1969): 17–52; P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens*

recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans (Paris, 1979).

16 The shrine is documented as operating continually until the late ninth century in Coptic sources. See Drescher, *Apa Mena*, xxviii–xxix (n. 11 above). Menas, of course, continued to be venerated and depicted in Egyptian churches throughout the middle ages. See, for example, the eleventh- or twelfth-century image of St. Menas on horseback at the Church of St. Macarius at Deir Abū Maqar in the Wādī Naṭrūn, J. Leroy, *Peintures des couvents du Ouadi Natroun* (Cairo, 1982), 123–25, pl. IV. The painting of the equestrian St. Menas at the Monastery of St. Anthony, dated 1232/33, shows the immovable camel of the legend along with its frustrated driver. Both are beneath the horse the saint is riding. E. Bolman, *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of*

St. Anthony at the Red Sea (New Haven, 2002), 41–42, figs. 4.6, 4.7.

17 In contrast to the numerous Menas ampullae found at Mareotis, at Alexandria, and in Europe, very few have emerged in the excavations of Coptic sites such as Bawīt and Kellia. Kiss, *Ampoules de Saint Ménas*, 12, n. 45 (n. 6 above).

appear in the hagiographic record around the end of the ninth century.¹⁸ A similar process was at work in the vitae and imagery of St. Menas made over the next several centuries. The changes introduced in his iconography and in the texts of his life transformed Menas from a simple soldier into an officer and courtier, from the accessible object of popular (in both senses) pilgrimage to a heavenly protector of the Byzantine state. In so doing, they integrated the Egyptian soldier into the very different world of the imperial capital and its symbolic economy of images.

Images of Menas after Iconoclasm

Although images of St. Menas postdating 842 are far less numerous than those of the early Byzantine period, he reemerges in monumental painting of the eleventh century and later as one of the company of soldier-martyrs that make up the typical program of church decoration.¹⁹ We have already noted the changes in his appearance: the round, grey beard and aged countenance, and the noble costume, replacing the earlier short tunic.²⁰ In a number of post-Iconoclastic representations St. Menas also either carries or wears an image of Christ. Christ's image, which is consistently confined to bust length, appears in several guises: as the central feature of the martyr's cross, within a roundel held in the saint's hands or floating before his chest, or as decoration on the tablion of his cloak. The appendix below lists thirteen images in fresco, icon painting, metalwork, and manuscript illumination where an icon of Christ is added to Menas's portrait.²¹ This list of monuments should not be considered comprehensive, and it should not give the impression that St. Menas always appears in conjunction with the image of Christ after the eleventh century. The bust of St. Menas in the frescoes at Lagoudera, for example, shares with other middle Byzantine representations of the saint the iconographic elements of the tightly curled gray hair, the rounded beard,

¹⁸ Delehaye, "Invention des reliques," 145–50 (n. 9 above). The "naturalization" of St. Menas in Byzantium, of course, also implies the isolation of the Greek hagiographical tradition after the ninth century. Drescher presents a variety of Coptic texts, including *passiones*, miracles, and encomia, based on three ninth-century manuscripts. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, xxxiv–xxxv. Arabic texts about St. Menas from manuscripts of the fourteenth century and later are edited and translated by F. Jaritz, *Die arabischen Quellen zum Heiligen Menas*, ADAIK, Islamische Reihe 7 (Heidelberg, 1993).

¹⁹ C. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in*

Byzantine Art and Tradition (Aldershot, 2003), 188–89.

²⁰ The longer tunic does appear in certain early representations of St. Menas, such as an ivory plaque that Weitzmann connected to eighth-century Syria. *Age of Spirituality*, 578, cat. no. 517 (n. 3 above); K. Weitzmann, "The Ivories of the So-Called Grado Chair," *DOP* 26 (1972): 82–85, fig. 5. Jennifer Ball has argued that the short tunic is representative of non-elites in Byzantine art; *Byzantine Dress* (New York, 2005), 84–85.

²¹ T. Chatzidakis earlier compiled a list of examples, including Karabaş Kilise, St. Nicholas tou Kasnitzi at Kastoria,

St. Nicholas Orphanos at Thessalonike, Nerezi, Mileševa, and Sopoćani. She also lists as a further example of the icon-bearing type of St. Menas his portrayal in the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Morača (Montenegro), with frescoes dated ca. 1260 and later. I have not been able to confirm this identification, and no image of Christ is shown in the line drawings of the fresco by S. Petković, *Morača* (Belgrade, 1986), 263. T. Chatzidakis, "Particularités iconographiques du décor peint des chapelles occidentales de Saint-Luc en Phocide," *CahArch* 22 (1972): 90–91.



Fig. 5 St. Menas. Panagia tou Arakos, Lagoudera (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

the rich court costume, and the martyr's cross, but without any image of Christ (fig. 5). Even in Palaiologan painting, the inserted image of Christ is not a universal attribute of the saint.²² Nonetheless, the sizeable proportion of images of St. Menas that over the course of four centuries show him carrying or wearing the image of Christ hardly constitutes an aberration. The continuous pattern calls for an explanation.

The Byzantine hagiographic tradition for St. Menas is the most logical place to start to understand the peculiarities of his later iconography. This is not a question of finding the passage of the saint's vita that the image somehow illustrates. Even if such a text existed, it would not explain why Byzantine artists followed it to alter the image of the saint. One may expect Byzantine artists to have the authority of a textual source for their iconography, but the existence of such a source does not alone explain the innovation. As was the case with the early Byzantine iconography of Menas, text and image operate in dialogue within the cultural context. In the later images of the saint, this context is the visual hierarchy that structured the imperial court at Constantinople. The remainder of this article attempts to uncover not only the possible textual sources of the imagery of Menas as a courtier but also the larger cultural motives that led to its development and perpetuation in works of art.

²² Compare, for example, the iconless figure of St. Menas at Elasson. E. Constantinides, *The Wall Paintings of the Panagia Olympiotissa at Elasson in Northern Thessaly* (Athens, 1992), 84, 236–38, pls. 96, 97, 177.



Fig. 6 SS. Viktor, Menas, and Vikentios. Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery, cod. 500, fol. 129v (photo reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan—Princeton—Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)

Which St. Menas?

Before we can turn to the various redactions of Menas's vita, however, we are confronted with another problem. As so often in medieval hagiography, there are, in fact, two Saints Menas with distinct feast days but somewhat similar legends.²³ The St. Menas of the shrine at Mareotis is the one variously known as Menas of Phrygia or Menas of Egypt. This Menas is said to have been a native of Egypt and a soldier in the Roman army in the reign of Diocletian and Maximian. Having deserted the army in disgust over the emperors' anti-Christian policies, he lived for a time as an anchorite before revealing himself to a local governor in a crowded amphitheater. The city of Kotyaion in Phrygia is given as his place of martyrdom in many of the lives, which are then at pains to explain how his body returned to Egypt and to the site of his shrine at Abū Mīnā. This St. Menas is commemorated on 11 November, along with the otherwise unrelated Viktor and Vikentios, martyred respectively in Italy and Spain.²⁴ The three appear together as the illustration for this day in the Sinai Metaphrastian Menologion (fig. 6).²⁵

²³ For a similar case, see A. Crabbe, "St. Polychronius and His Companions—But Which Polychronius?" in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. S. Hackel, University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (London, 1981), 141–54. The problem of the distinction between the Saints Menas is also treated by Walter, *Warrior Saints*, 181–90 (n. 19 above), although our conclusions do not agree in all respects.

²⁴ *Synaxarium CP*, 211–14.

²⁵ N. P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago, 1990), 65, microfilm fig. 1G10; K. Weitzmann and G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts* (Princeton, 1990), 73–74, 76–77, fig. 210.

The other St. Menas, commemorated on 10 December with his companions in martyrdom Hermogenes and Euegraphos, is also associated with Egypt.²⁶ This Menas, sometimes referred to as Menas Kallikelados, is supposed to have been an Athenian by birth and a senator at Byzantium (!) also during the reign of Diocletian and Maximian. An accomplished orator whose private conversion to Christianity escapes the attention of the Roman authorities, he is sent by the emperors to Alexandria to persuade the Christians there to convert to paganism.²⁷ His rhetorical skills are applied, of course, to the opposite goal, and he turns many of Alexandria's pagans to Christ. Menas is denounced to the emperor, who, enraged at the turn of events, sends the eparch Hermogenes to punish him. Menas's faith under torture converts Hermogenes in turn, and, finally, Hermogenes and Menas meet martyrdom along with the latter's notary, Euegraphos. Their relics are subsequently translated to the city of Byzantium.²⁸

Delehay's careful sifting of the hagiographical tradition led him to conclude that St. Menas of Phrygia and St. Menas Kallikelados were originally one and the same figure, although the relationship of either legend to a historical individual remains doubtful. The great Bollandist's seminal article valiantly attempts to sort out which legends pertain to which saint; his conclusions on this score are nevertheless still open to question.²⁹ What is certain, however, is that by the eleventh century the two saints were considered distinct and were separately commemorated. The oldest datable stratum of the Greek hagiographic tradition, the verse encomium of St. Menas by Romanos the Melode, already shows clearly the distinct features of the biography of Menas of Phrygia, namely his desertion from the army, sojourn in the wilderness, and subsequent appearance in the midst of a theater.³⁰ Symeon Metaphrastes composed a rather lengthy *passio* of SS. Menas, Hermogenes, and Euegraphos in addition to his separate and more succinct life for the more important St. Menas commemorated on 11 November.³¹ Although St. Menas of Phrygia is more popular in monumental painting, several fresco programs feature images of both him and Menas Kallikelados.³² The post-Byzantine *Hermeneia*, or painter's manual, consistently distinguishes the two SS. Menas:

²⁶ Symeon Metaphrastes, *Martyrium sanctorum martyrum Menae, Hermogenis et Euegraphi* (BHG 1271), PG 116:367–416.

²⁷ *Martyrium Menae*, PG 116:368–69.

²⁸ *Synaxarium CP*, 294.

²⁹ See Alexander Kazhdan's critique of the Bollandists' distribution of the texts between the two SS. Menas: A. Kazhdan, "The Noble Origin of Saint Menas," *Byzantina* 13.1 (1985): 670.

³⁰ K. Krumbacher, *Miscellen zu Romanos*, AbhMünch, Phil.-hist.Kl. 24 (1909): 1–9; Delehay, "Invention des reliques," 121–22 (n. 9 above).

³¹ The Metaphrastian *Life of Menas of Phrygia* (BHG 1250) has been edited by G. Van Hoof, "Acta Sancti Menae martyris Aegyptii," *AB* 3 (1884): 258–70; Metaphrastes' *passio* of Menas, Hermogenes, and Euegraphos is in PG 116:368–416.

³² At the church of Episcopi in the Mani, Menas Kallikelados appears on the north side of the nave with SS. Hermogenes and Euegraphos. On the opposite, south arch there are medallion images of SS. Menas, Viktor, and Vikentios. Neither St. Menas bears any trace of an image of Christ. N. Drandakes, *Βυζαντινές τοιχογραφίες της Μέσα Μάνης* (Athens, 1995), 201–3, 168–69, figs. 21–22, 179, fig. 29, pl. 40.

the Menas of 11 November is elderly, with a rounded beard; the homonymous saint commemorated on 10 December is younger, with a slightly pointed beard.³³ The fourteenth-century mosaicists of the Kariye Camii, however, drew a different distinction between the saints. They showed both figures as gray bearded and elderly, but they made Menas of Alexandria bald and gave prominent curls to Menas of Phrygia.³⁴

The appearance of Menas with the Christ image in the illustrations of the eleventh-century Menologion at Sinai (fig. 6) is strong evidence for the association of this iconographic type with the saint commemorated on 11 November. This is borne out by the number of monuments in which St. Menas appears with Christ's image and is accompanied by SS. Viktor and Vikentios, who share his feast day. In one case, however, at Mileševa, St. Menas with the medallion image of Christ stands between SS. Hermogenes and Eugephos, which would identify him as Menas Kallikelados, the saint commemorated on 10 December.³⁵ The confusion is not surprising. In fact, the iconographic problem would be far more straightforward if it were the senatorial St. Menas Kallikelados who was regularly depicted this way. The elderly countenance, gray hair, and courtly dress with its decorated tablion make rather more sense for the martyr celebrated on 10 December than for his more famous counterpart the soldier.³⁶ Although some cross-contamination between the two is possible, it seems improbable that the better-known saint would adopt wholesale the lineaments and costume of the other. Nor can the existence of *two* SS. Menas explain the icon of Christ as a distinguishing attribute of Menas of Phrygia. It appears too inconsistently to function as an iconographic earmark, like the variant hairstyles that differentiate St. Theodore Tiron from his hagiographical double, St. Theodore Stratelates.³⁷ The existence of a second St. Menas seems to have affected the iconography of the great martyr of Egypt minimally, if at all.

33 D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios* (Athens, 1985), 170; Dionysios of Phourna, *Ερμηνεία της ζωγραφικής τέχνης*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St. Petersburg, 1909), 157, 196, 197, 270, 296.

34 P. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), 1:153; 2: pls. 162, 173. A similar distinction is observed at Staro Nagoričino. B. Todić, *Staro Nagoričino* (Belgrade, 1993), 77, 124.

35 V. Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslavien*, trans. A. Hamm (Munich, 1976), 47. An eleventh-century seal at Dumbarton

Oaks of one Constantine vestarches, judge of the Velum, shows SS. Nicholas and Menas Kallikelados lifting their hands toward a medallion image of Christ. E. McGeer, J. Nesbitt, and N. Oikonomides, eds., *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art* (Washington, DC, 2005), 5:60. My thanks to Alice-Mary Talbot for bringing this image to my attention.

36 These very considerations led Theano Chatzidakis to conclude that the saint depicted in the northwest chapel of Hosios Loukas was Menas Kallikelados;

"Particularités iconographiques," 92 n. 18 (n. 21 above).

37 Maguire, *Icons of Their Bodies*, 21–22 (n. 1 above); Walter, *Warrior Saints*, 59–66 (n. 19 above).

Other Iconophoroi in Byzantine Art

St. Menas of Phrygia is certainly not the only saint to appear from time to time with the image of Christ. St. Stephen the Younger is frequently depicted holding a diptych icon of Christ and the Virgin or, in certain cases, the icon of Christ as Man of Sorrows (Ἄκρα Ταπείνωσις).³⁸ The reason is evident. St. Stephen suffered martyrdom for his defense of icons, having publicly assailed the decision of the Council of Hieria (754) by loudly chanting the troparion “τὴν ἄχραντον εἰκόνα σου προσκυνούμεν.”³⁹ Another iconodule persecuted by Leo V, St. Niketas of Medikion, is shown in the Menologion of Basil II dressed, like Stephen the Younger, in his monastic habit and holding a medallion portrait of Christ.⁴⁰ There is also the famous Palaiologan icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy conserved in the British Museum. Within this image, icons are held by various prominent opponents of Iconoclasm, including Theophanes the Confessor and Theodore the Stoudite, who hold a medallion icon between them, and St. Theodosia of Constantinople, holding a bust of Christ on an oblong panel.⁴¹ The Byzantine marginal psalters are replete with similar representations of such iconodule heroes holding or pointing to the icon of Christ. The icon is here not so much an attribute of the figure as a sign of his allegiance to icon veneration in opposition to the demonized Iconoclasts, who are shown abusing Christ by dishonoring his icons.⁴²

Other saints hold icons more occasionally, to serve particular iconographic ends. St. Paraskeve appears in certain late Byzantine paintings, particularly Cypriot icons, holding the icon of Christ as the Man of Sorrows. Here, the homonymy between the martyr and Good Friday has led to her appropriation of the cult image of the day, a development that was conditioned by the image's use and veneration in the rites of Holy Week.⁴³ Sometimes the icon of Christ is put

38 E.g., in the prothesis at Sopoćani

(Djurić, *Sopoćani*, 134 [n. 4 above]);

Copenhagen Metaphrastian Menologion,

Copenhagen Royal Library, Gl. Kongl.

Saml. 167, fol. 187r. M. Mackeprang and

others, eds., *Greek and Latin Illuminated*

Manuscripts, X–XIII Centuries, in Danish

Collections (Copenhagen, 1921), 5–6,

pl. IV. Stephen appears with the Man

of Sorrows icon at St. Nicholas Orphanos

in Thessalonike. A. Xyngopoulos, *Oi*

Τοιχογραφίες τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου Ὁρφανοῦ

Θεσσαλονίκης (Athens, 1964), 23, pl. 159.

39 M.-F. Auzépy, *La vie d'Étienne le Jeune*

par Étienne le Diacre (Paris, 1997), 130–31.

40 *Il Menologio di Basilio II* (Turin, 1907),

2:94.

41 D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium: Treasures*

of Byzantine Art and Culture from British

Collections (London, 1994), 129–30, cat.

no. 140.

42 K. Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in*

the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters

(Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 69–75; C. Walter,

“‘Latter-Day’ Saints and the Image of Christ

in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Marginal

Psalters,” *REB* 45 (1987): 205–22, esp. 215–16.

43 H. Belting, “An Image and Its

Function in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows

in Byzantium,” *DOP* 34/35 (1980–81): 7;

A. Papageorgiou, *Icons of Cyprus* (Nicosia,

1992), 62–63, fig. 41.

to exegetical use, as in depictions of the image of Christ Emmanuel held by the Archangels or by Old Testament patriarchs.⁴⁴ In these depictions, the image of the young Christ symbolizes his nature as eternal logos, foretold by the patriarchs and dwelling from before time among the angels.⁴⁵

St. Menas's connection with the icon seems not to fit either of these classes of representations. There is no apparent exegetical content to the images of Menas with the icon of Christ, since they occur neither in marginal illustrations, where they might comment on the text, nor on objects or spaces of high liturgical significance, where they might address the Eucharistic action. Indeed, the one case adduced here of a manuscript painting featuring this iconography—a menologion—hardly allows for the image to comment on anything other than the text of the life. This is quite a different case from the illustration of the marginal psalters with icons of Christ variously held and displayed that inflect the neighboring images and offer visual commentary on the psalm text. There is another important difference in Menas's relationship to the icon: in only one case does his body touch the image of Christ.⁴⁶ In all other representations, the image either floats freely above the saint's chest or the cross he holds, or adorns some part of his clothing. The representation of Christ associated with St. Menas is therefore of a different order than those found in depictions of other iconophoroi in Byzantine art. A closer look at the development of Menas's hagiography will help us to understand the significance of the strangely autonomous images of Christ associated with the saint.

The Evidence of Hagiography

Previous scholars who have noted the curious association of St. Menas with Christ's icon have looked to the vita and miracles of the saint for explanations. Guillaume de Jerphanion associated the image with Menas's highly public proclamation of his faith in Christ in the crowded theater.⁴⁷ The icon would thus represent in pictorial form

44 Steatite of Archangel Gabriel now in the Museo Bandini, Fiesole: I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*, ByzVind 15 (Vienna, 1985), 119–22, cat. no. 30, pl. 17. Icon of Archangel Michael weighing souls, Museo Nazionale di S. Matteo, Pisa: J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, ed., *Splendeur de Byzance: 2 octobre–2 décembre 1982; Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, Bruxelles* (Brussels, 1982), 38–39, cat. no. Ic. 4. Patriarch Jacob at Staro Nagoričino (ca. 1316–18), Todić, *Staro Nagoričino*, 77, pl. 79 (n. 34 above).

Theano Chatzidakis points out the cross with bust of Christ held by John the Baptist at St. Sofia at Ochrid, *Les peintures murales de Hosios Loukas: Les chapelles occidentales* (Athens, 1982), 74.

45 On the Synaxis of the Archangels, see S. Gabelić, “Četiri freske iz ciklusa arhandjela Mihaila u Lesnovy,” *Zograf* 7 (1977): 58–59, 64.

46 The exception is the icon from Kition on Cyprus (no. 10 in the appendix: Menas holds the icon in his hands). This variant

depiction may owe something to the popularity of similar images of St. Paraskeve in Cypriot painting.

47 *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin: Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1936), 2:337, n. 2, and “Caractéristiques et attributs des saints dans la peinture cappadocienne,” in *La voix des monuments, Études d'archéologie, nouvelle série* (Rome–Paris, 1938), 317.

the openness of his Christian confession. The incident, however, is one that either Romanos or his (hypothetical) source lifted wholesale from Basil of Caesarea's encomium of St. Gordios.⁴⁸ While it is remotely possible that this passage, borrowed from an earlier life of a saint considerably less prominent in the Byzantine pantheon, helped shape the later iconography of St. Menas, nevertheless St. Gordios himself is never, to my knowledge, depicted with an icon.⁴⁹ Moreover, the saint's public proclamation of faith in Christ is a feature intrinsic to all martyrs. Virtually every life of a martyr involves some public testimony to his or her faith in the hearing not only of the judge but also of some segment of the public as representatives of "the world," a topos maintained in hagiography from the biblical account of the stoning of St. Stephen to the ninth-century vita of his Byzantine namesake.⁵⁰ Had public proclamation of Christ motivated the iconography, we should expect all who bear public witness to Christ (μαρτυροῦνται) to share it.⁵¹

Theano Chatzidakis offers an explanation from a different hagiographic tradition—the Metaphrastian passio of SS. Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugraphos, jointly commemorated on 10 December—to suggest the motivation for Menas's depiction with the icon. During his imprisonment Menas Kallikelados, the senator and skilled rhetor, has a vision of Christ, who promises to strengthen him for the trial ahead and provides him with the words he shall speak by the spirit rather than through premeditated oratory.⁵² The icon would thus represent the saint's God-given strength for the battle, and Chatzidakis associates its defensive qualities with the image-bearing cross that Menas holds in the fresco of the northwest chapel of the Katholikon at Hosios Loukas (fig. 7).⁵³

Fig. 7 St. Menas. Northwest chapel of Katholikon, Hosios Loukas, Phokis (photo: after Chatzidakis, *Ὁσίου Λουκάς*, pl. 58)



48 Delehay, "Invention des reliques," 122 (n. 9 above). The encomium (BHG 703): Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia in Gordium Martyrem*, PG 31:489–508. The Latin version appears in *AASS Januarii* 1:130–33.

49 I know of only one depiction of St. Gordios of Caesarea in art, the depiction of his martyrdom in the *Menologion of Basil II*. *Menologio di Basilio II*, 2:292. Other saints, however, appear in the same manuscript with the image of Christ, e.g., the empress Theodora (ibid., 392).

50 Acts 7:2–60; M.-F. Auzépy, *Vie d'Étienne le Jeune*, 168–71 (n. 39 above).

51 An alternative interpretation is suggested by Xyngopoulos for the image of St. Menas at St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessalonike. Xyngopoulos, followed by Tania Velmans, connects the round image

of Christ to a silver plate that was the subject of one of the saint's posthumous miracles. The text of the miracle, however, mentions no image on the plate, and at any rate it would hardly explain why it appears in this case on the tablion of Menas's cloak. Xyngopoulos, *Τοιχογραφίες*, 22 (n. 38 above); T. Velmans, "Les fresques de Saint-Nicolas-Orphanos à Salonique," *CahArch* 16 (1966): 164. The text of the miracle is edited and translated by J. Duffy and E. Bourbouhakis, "Five Miracles of St. Menas," in *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations: Texts and Translations Dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides*, ed. J. Nesbitt, *The Medieval Mediterranean* 49 (Leiden, 2003), 70–73.

52 PG 116:385; Chatzidakis, "Particularités iconographiques," 92 (n. 21

above); eadem, *Peintures murales*, 73–74 (n. 44 above). Cf. Mark 13.11; Luke 12.11–12.

53 "Particularités iconographiques," 91. Ironically, an eleventh-century redaction of the life of St. Menas of Phrygia also explicitly invokes the notion of the Holy Spirit providing the saint with the words of his defense. Th. Ioannou, *Μνημεία αγιολογικά νῦν πρῶτον ἐκδιδόμενα* (Venice, 1884; repr. Leipzig, 1973), 293.

Even if, as I believe, Chatzidakis used the life of the wrong St. Menas, she correctly linked the motif of the cross with clipeate image (*imago clipeata*) to the imperial iconography brought to light by André Grabar.⁵⁴ Grabar highlights the militaristic aspects of the large processional cross fixed behind the altar of the Great Lavra, with its medallion images of Christ and the saints and its inscription, taken from Psalm 43:6 (44:5): “In thee will we push down our enemies, and in thy name will we bring to naught them that rise up against us.”⁵⁵ The cross, the preeminent banner of victory in Byzantium since Constantine’s vision on the eve of battle with Maxentius, Grabar associates with the military campaigns of the Macedonian emperors.⁵⁶ He also locates intriguing parallels to its iconography in works of wholly different character. During his brief reign, the emperor Alexander (912–913) minted silver coins with a reverse design featuring a barred cross on steps centering a clipeate image of Christ. The silver *miliariesia* of his successors Romanos I, Nikephoros Phokas, and John Tzimiskes show a cross with a central medallion containing not Christ’s image but the emperor’s (figs. 8, 9).⁵⁷ Grabar links these emperors’ embrace of the image-bearing cross as a sign of their prowess in war and reliance on the cross as the Byzantine armies’ battle standard.⁵⁸ Grabar also links the military associations of this type of cross to an ivory diptych now divided between Dumbarton Oaks and the Schlossmuseum in Gotha, each leaf of which shows a jeweled cross (figs. 10, 11).⁵⁹ At the center of the leaf in Washington is the medallion portrait of an emperor, who makes a gesture of *paraklesis* toward the other leaf, which shows Christ in the center of the cross. The rigid symmetry of the diptych and the identically framed roundels set in striking parallel the busts of the emperor and Christ. The emperor’s slight turning gesture is the only mitigating factor in a composition that otherwise stresses the complete equivalence between his image and that of Christ.

With this imperial iconography in mind, let us then turn to the “standard” middle Byzantine text of the life of St. Menas, the menologion entry by Symeon Metaphrastes. Its most significant trope, I will argue, is the contrast between the unjust kingdom (*βασιλεία*)



Figs. 8–9 Miliariesion of Constantine VII with Romanos I (photo: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC)

54 Chatzidakis, “Particularités iconographiques,” 91; A. Grabar, “La précieuse croix de la Lavra Saint-Athanase au Mont-Athos,” *CahArch* 19 (1969): 117–20. See also Grabar, “L’imago clipeata chrétienne,” *CRAI* (1957), reprinted in *L’art de la fin de l’Antiquité et du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1968), 1:607–13.

55 ἐν σοὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν κερατιοῦμεν, καὶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου / ἐξουθενώσομεν τοὺς

ἐπανισταμένους ἡμῖν. Trans. C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha* (London, 1851).

56 “Précieuse croix,” 101, 112–16, fig. 2.

57 *DOC* 3.2:523, 525, 537, 556–57, 580, 585–86, 590, 596–98, pls. xxxv, xxxvii, xli, xlii.

58 “Précieuse croix,” 119–20, figs. 21a–e.

59 *Ibid.*, 120, fig. 23. Anthony Cutler suggests that the diptych was meant to hold the parchment codicils of appointment,

which, according to the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, were presented to imperial officials at court. *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9th–11th Centuries)* (Princeton, 1994), 235.



of Diocletian and Maximian and the true kingdom to which Menas belongs, that of Christ. The passio is set in a time of persecution: the reigning emperors Diocletian and Maximian are characterized as enemies of Christ, the true king, and their open rebellion against him is signaled by their unjust decree mandating death as the penalty for failure to participate in pagan rites.⁶⁰ Menas responds to their decree by removing his military belt (στρατιωτικὴ ζώνη) and fleeing into the desert to live as a solitary.⁶¹ Here, a change in costume signals a change in the saint's status and allegiance. The choice of clothing is also significant, for belt buckles were used to display imperial portraits on the uniform of Roman soldiers. The copies of the *Notitia dignitatum*

Figs. 10–11 Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, and Gotha, Schlossmuseum, ivory diptych (photo: Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, DC; Gotha, Schlossmuseum)

⁶⁰ Van Hoof, "Acta Sancti Menae," 258–59 (n. 31 above). This detail is also present in the encomium of St. Gordios, PG 31:493–96; *AASS Januarii*, 1:131.

⁶¹ Van Hoof, "Acta Sancti Menae," 260.

show belt buckles as part of the official largesse of the imperial treasury, and surviving examples bear portraits and inscriptions attesting to their imperial source (figs. 12, 13).⁶² The belt, with its accompanying image, was such a crucial symbol of office in the late Roman Empire that the Latin expressions *sumere cingulum* and *deponere cingulum* were used for assuming and resigning appointment.⁶³ By removing his belt, Menas effectively renounces his allegiance to the unjust emperors. Curiously, while the detail of the military belt is present in Basil's encomium of St. Gordios, it was taken up neither in Romanos's hymn to Menas nor the earliest prose text of his martyrdom (*BHG* 1254).⁶⁴ Its reintroduction in the Metaphrastian life must therefore have been a deliberate choice. Despite their distance in time from St. Basil and the customs he described as a contemporary, Symeon Metaphrastes' audience would have been familiar with similar conventions of imperial portraits on official costume as they continued to be employed in the middle and late Byzantine periods. They would thus have been able to draw the connection between the image-bearing insignia and the saint's sworn allegiance to the heavenly King.

Can we in fact link late antique conventions of military costume and later Byzantine usage for court officials in the iconography of St. Menas? The textual history of his *vita* provides an important clue. In a short but extremely lucid article, Alexander Kazhdan called attention to the introduction of new elements into the life of St. Menas of Phrygia postdating the tenth-century Metaphrastian version of the *vita*.⁶⁵ One such text, edited in the nineteenth century by Theophilos Ioannou, gives a particularly rhetorical account of the martyrdom of SS. Menas, Viktor, and Vikentios. Krumbacher relates it to the literary revival under the Komnenoi, and Kazhdan assigns it to the

62 O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (London, 1901), 40, cat. no. 253, pl. IV; I. M. Johannsen, "Rings, Fibulae and Buckles with Imperial Portraits and Inscriptions," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 7 (1994): 223–42, esp. 229–31. My thanks to Genevra Kornbluth for bringing Johannsen's article to my attention.

63 Johannsen, "Rings, Fibulae and Buckles," 231 n. 58.

64 Krumbacher, *Miscellen zu Romanos*, 1–9; 31–43 (n. 30 above).

65 "The Noble Origin of Saint Menas," *Byzantina* 13.1 (1985): 667–71.

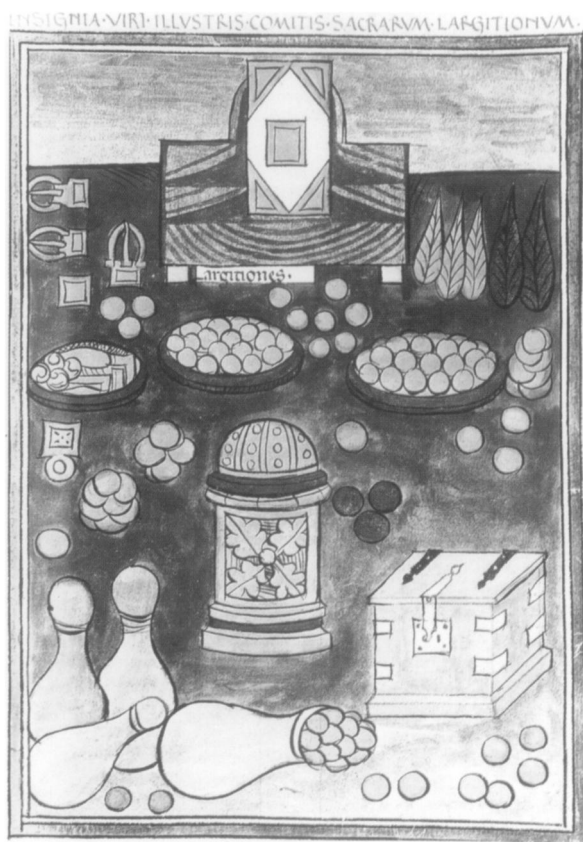


Fig. 12 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 9661, fol. 119, Treasury of the Comes Sacrum Largitionum (photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France)

Fig. 13 London, British Museum, belt buckle with imperial bust, 4th century (photo copyright The Trustees of the British Museum)



eleventh century.⁶⁶ While the Metaphrastian life had emphasized the lack of Christian piety of Menas's father and ancestors (πατέρα δὲ καὶ προγόνους οὐκ ἀσφαλεῖς τὴν εὐσέβειαν), it made no mention of their social rank.⁶⁷ The eleventh-century life, however, substitutes familial nobility for piety. Menas is said to be from Egypt, but well born (εὐγενῶν δὲ γονέων γεγένηται βλαστὸς εὐγενέστερος).⁶⁸ Where Metaphrastes has Menas removing his military belt in response to the emperors' impious decree, the later text has him resign his military commission (καταλιπὼν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ στρατείαν). As he explains to the governor in the amphitheater at Kotyaion, he resigned his worldly military office to take up the pure and permanent one of Christ by retreating to the wilderness. Under further questioning from the governor, he confesses that he is from a distinguished family and that he had abandoned civil honor (τιμὴ κοσμική) as well as his military office to serve the heavenly emperor rather than the earthly ones (ἐλόμενος μᾶλλον βασιλεῖ στρατεύεσθαι τῷ ἐπουρανίῳ ἢ συναπόλλυσθαι...τοῖς προσκαίροις βασιλεῦσιν).⁶⁹ Since the text continues with the legends of the other saints commemorated on 11 November, there is no possibility of confusion with the legend of the senatorial St. Menas Kallikelados. Clearly, the noble descent and court office are innovations deliberately worked into the life of St. Menas, the Egyptian martyred at Kotyaion in Phrygia. Kazhdan connects these changes with value placed in the Komnenian period on noble lineage and official appointment.⁷⁰ Similar concerns, however, already appear by the beginning of the eleventh century in the transformed image of the saint.

Seen in the light of the eleventh-century updating of the hagiographical texts, the new iconography of St. Menas that emerges in the same century can be understood as building on familiar courtly practices. The significant detail of renouncing his imperial ensign in the Metaphrastian life becomes magnified into noble rank and court office. Iconography here parallels the shift in the text, substituting for Menas's short military tunic the long tunic and chlamys with tablion appropriate to a high-ranking official at court.⁷¹ Menas's argument with the pagan governor over the nature of the true βασιλεύς and βασιλεία culminates already in Symeon Metaphrastes' redaction: Menas resolves to shed his garment of flesh for the garment of

66 Ioannou, *Μνημεῖα ἀγιολογικά*, 284–97 (n. 53 above); Krumbacher, *Miscellen zu Romanos*, 54; Kazhdan, “Noble Origin,” 671.

67 Van Hoof, “Acta Sancti Menae,” 259.

68 Ioannou, *Μνημεῖα ἀγιολογικά*, 286.

69 Ibid., 287–89.

70 “Noble Origin,” 671.

71 As further evidence of the impact of local priorities on the texts of saints' vitae, the medieval Arabic life of Menas has him change into monastic dress for his retreat into the wilderness. F. Jartitz, *Die Arabischen Quellen zum Heiligen Menas* (Heidelberg, 1993), 93, 128–29.

salvation (τὸ τοῦ σωτηρίου...ἐνδύμα).⁷² The play of image against text amplifies this trope, making it an exchange of the garments of the earthly courtier for those of the servant of Christ. In the Komnenian passio, the frustrated governor offers Menas even greater honors than those he previously enjoyed if only he will renounce the name of Christ. Menas rejects the offer, saying, “for I am zealous to become a partaker in a military command and honor in heaven, for, as it is written, our government is in heaven.”⁷³ Menas’s image, moreover, demonstrates without ambiguity that the court he belongs to is not that of Diocletian and Maximian but the heavenly court of Christ. The image-bearing cross that Menas holds in the Sinai menologion and at Hosios Loukas alludes to then-recent works of imperial art and coinage, but the emperor’s image is replaced with that of Christ. Like the detail of the removal of Menas’s belt in the Metaphrastian life, it shows his transferred allegiance to the kingdom of heaven.

The Imperial Image and the Image of Christ

In signifying Menas’s membership in the heavenly ranks through the image he bears, the artists and hagiographers who reshaped his Byzantine identity were drawing on well-established traditions of late Roman art. The clipeate portrait, as Grabar has stressed, was used in late antiquity specifically to make distant persons present.⁷⁴ Persons depicted in the *imago clipeata* occupy not the secondary order of representation that a “picture within a picture” would imply, but a higher order of immanence that allows them to be visible to the viewer but invisible to the other figures within the image. The Sinai icon of St. Peter draws on this tradition; the roundels of Christ, the Virgin, and St. John make them, in a sense, more directly present to the viewer than the relatively illusionistic rendering of Peter himself (fig. 1). The imago clipeata was also used for independent panel paintings of the emperor, such as the unique group of Septimius Severus and his family preserved in Berlin, that signified the presence of the emperor’s authority even in his physical absence—witness the wrath of Theodosius I at the injury done to his portraits at Antioch.⁷⁵ The role such imperial images played in civic life was repeated on a smaller

72 Van Hoof, “Acta Sancti Menae,” 264–65.

73 ἐγὼ γὰρ σπουδάζω τῆς ἐν οὐρανοῖς στρατείας καὶ τιμῆς μέτοχος γενέσθαι, καθὼς γέγραπται, ὅτι τὸ πολίτευμα ἡμῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει. Ioannou, *Μνημεῖα ἀγιολογικά*, 296, referring to Phil. 4:20. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

74 “L’imago clipeata,” 607 (n. 54 above); H. Kessler, “Configuring the Original by

Copying the Holy Face,” in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Villa Spelman Colloquia 6 (Bologna, 1998), 144.

75 On the evidence for imperial panel portraits in late antiquity, see A. Grabar, “The Portrait,” in *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins* (Princeton, 1968), 73–79; P. Zanker, *Provinzielle Kaiserporträts: Zur Rezeption der Selbstdarstellung des Princeps* (Munich, 1983); H. Belting, *Likeness and*

Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art, trans. E. Jephcott (Chicago, 1994), 102–14. On attacks on Byzantine imperial portraits, see A. Eastmond, “Between Icon and Idol: The Uncertainty of Imperial Images,” in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium*, ed. A. Eastmond and L. James (Aldershot, 2003), 77–81.

scale by wearable images of the sovereign bestowed on individuals of rank. In this case, the authority of the absent emperor could be delegated to the bearer of his images.⁷⁶

A number of late antique works of art show officials wearing costume that bears imperial images. The most famous of these, two ivory plaques in the Bargello, Florence, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, show a Byzantine empress, probably Ariadne, with the image of her husband and sovereign (if Ariadne, either Zeno or Anastasius) within a roundel on the tablion of her chlamys (fig. 14).⁷⁷ The implication of the empress being vested with the imperial portrait is that she exercises authority on his behalf. Contemporary texts reveal that the convention of subject officials wearing the emperor's image could be applied to the granting of titles to foreign rulers as well. John Malalas records Justin I's appointment of the Caucasian chieftan Tzathe, "Emperor of the Laz," to the court office of *kouropalates*. The emperor sponsored Tzathe's baptism and found him a Christian wife from among the patrician class before sending him on his way with regalia bearing the imperial portrait:

*He wore the Roman imperial crown and a white chlamys of pure silk, having in lieu of the purple tablion an imperial golden tablion in the middle of which there was an authentic small bust bearing the likeness of the same emperor Justin, and also a white tunic, a paragaudes, itself having golden imperial embroideries, similarly bearing the likeness of the same emperor.*⁷⁸

Fig. 14 Florence, Bargello, ivory plaque with Byzantine empress (photo: Art Resource)



76 Johannsen, "Rings, fibulae and buckles," 240–42; Woodfin, "Late Byzantine Liturgical Vestments," n. 76, 2nd ref.: edit to W. Woodfin, "Late Byzantine Liturgical Vestments and the Iconography of Sacerdotal Power" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2002).

77 W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1976), 49–50, pl. 27. Compare also the portraits on the *toga picta* of the consuls Areobindus (506) and Anthemius (515) on

their respective diptychs (the latter diptych is now lost); *ibid.* no. 10, 33; R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1929), no. 17, 121–22. On the Ariadne images, see most recently D. Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariadne and Ideas about Female Imperial Authority in Rome and Early Byzantium," *Gesta* 43 (2004): 1–15.

78 καὶ φορέσας στεφάνιν Ῥωμαϊκὸν βασιλικὸν καὶ χλαμύδα ἄσπρον ὀλοσήρικον, ἔχον ἀντὶ πορφυροῦ ταβλίου χρυσοῦν βασιλικὸν

ταβλίον, ἐν ᾧ ὑπῆρχεν ἐν μέσῳ στηθάριον ἀληθινὸν μικρόν, ἔχοντα τὸν χαρακτήρα τοῦ αὐτοῦ βασιλέως Ἰουστίνου, καὶ στιχάριν δὲ ἄσπρον παραγαῦδιν, καὶ αὐτὸ ἔχον χρυσᾷ πλουμία βασιλικά, ὡσαύτως ἔχοντα τὸν χαρακτήρα τοῦ αὐτοῦ βασιλέως. John Malalas, *Chronographia* 17, 9, ed. I. Thurn, CFHB 35 (Berlin, 2000), 340. Cf. Procopius, *De bello persico* 2.9, ed. J. Haury (Berlin, 1962), 215. Compare the parallel account in the *Chronicon Paschale*, L. Dindorf, ed., CSHB 16–17 (Bonn, 1832), 613–14.

The description of the costume worn by the emperor of the Laz confirms the interpretation of the imperial image worn as an ensign on the early Byzantine ivories. The embroidered portraits show that the wearer's authority is derived from that of the "true" emperor whose image he or she bears.

This convention was carried over from late antiquity into the middle Byzantine period with the use of silks and other diplomatic gifts bearing imperial portraits as *laurata*, signs of delegated authority. A number of textiles surviving in Western collections show equestrian emperors or portrait busts; although their exact history cannot be reconstructed, these almost certainly originated as diplomatic gifts from the Byzantine court.⁷⁹ A striking example of the phenomenon is the tenth-century "inscribed" green silk featuring repeated, haloed busts of an emperor wearing a crown with *prependoulia*, conserved in Augsburg as the Chasuble of St. Ulrich (fig. 15).⁸⁰ Far more common are textiles showing not the emperor himself but images of animals such as eagles, lions, and griffins, symbolic of imperial might. Because similar textiles to those that survive in Western collections are shown as the dress of courtiers in Byzantine art, they help to show how the sartorially articulated hierarchy of the imperial court was projected outward through strategic gift giving to bring other rulers under the symbolic sway of the emperor.⁸¹

Although we lack artistic depictions of court costumes with the imperial likeness in the middle Byzantine period, the example of the animal silks helps to demonstrate how the dynamics of gift giving to leaders outside the empire mirrored sartorial practices within the Byzantine court. The tablion must also have retained its importance as a focus of embroidered decoration, quite possibly including images of the emperor.⁸² In a number of representations of St. Menas of the twelfth through thirteenth centuries, the icon of Christ floats before the figure's torso exactly where the tablion of his cloak would fall. This convention, I believe, is meant to associate the image with the tablion, even though it is not confined to it. Just as the clipeate image of Christ at Hosios Loukas overlaps, but is not of a piece with, the cross that St. Menas holds in his hands, so the free-floating medallion icons of Christ that appear in the depictions of the saint at Karabaş

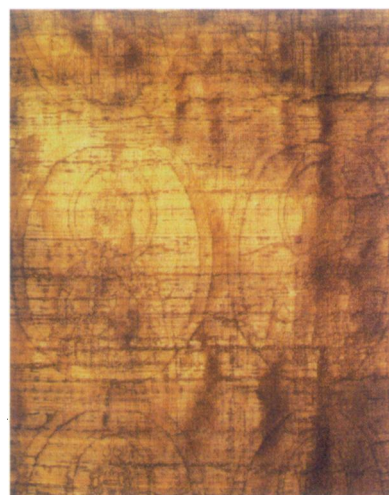


Fig. 15 Augsburg, Church of SS. Ulrich and Afra, Chasuble of St. Ulrich, detail (photo after R. Baumstark and others, eds., *Rom und Byzanz: Schatzkammerstücke aus bayerischen Sammlungen* [Munich, 1998], 215)

79 R. Schorta, *Monochrome Seidengewebe des hohen Mittelalters* (Berlin, 2001), 66–70; L. Jones and H. Maguire, "A Description of the Jousts of Manuel I Komnenos," *BMGS* 26 (2002): 123–24.

80 Schorta, *Monochrome Seidengewebe*, 158, 71, fig. 39.

81 Jones and Maguire, "Description of the

Jousts," 128–31.

82 On the tablion, see *ODB* 3:2004; N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles* (Paris, 1972), 95, 127; J. Reiske, ed., *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae* (Bonn, 1829), 1:142.18–19, 440.17.



Fig. 16 St. Menas. Kastoria, H. Nikolaos tou Kasnitzi (photo after Pelikanides and Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, 58, fig. 10)

Kilise, Kastoria (fig. 16), Episkopi, Mileševa (fig. 17), and Manastir represent the icon of Christ as a different order of image from the mere decoration of an object.

Herbert Kessler has recently called attention to a similar distinction between image and object in depictions of the Mandylion: the image is meant to be understood as existing independently of its iteration on the cloth or its copies. This explains why the Holy Face frequently overlaps the edge of the cloth or tile on which it is impressed, or fails to conform to the drape or orientation of its supporting fabric.⁸³ Kessler connects the divergence of image and support in works of art depicting the Mandylion and Keramion with the controversy surrounding the confiscation and melting down of church plate for the imperial fisc under Alexios I Komnenos. The destruction of the vessels was challenged by Leo, bishop of Chalcedon, on the grounds that the destruction of objects decorated with images of Christ and the saints would constitute a revival of iconoclasm. A council convened in 1095 condemned the bishop's stance as a heretical confusion of image and substance. In approving the emperor's action, the council decreed that the images of Christ and of the saints must be understood to exist, like platonic forms, independent of their material substrate.⁸⁴ Such an understanding seems to be evoked by the form of the *imago clipeata* that appears in representations of St. Menas. The busts

⁸³ H. Kessler, "Configuring the Original," 143–48, pls. 9–14 (n. 74 above).

⁸⁴ Kessler, "Configuring the Original," 141–42; A. W. Carr, "Leo of Chalcedon and the Icons," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. D. Mouriki (Princeton, 1995), 579–601.



Fig. 17 St. Menas. Mileševa, Church of the Ascension (photo by S. Gabelić)

of Christ that hover between the clothing and hands of St. Menas, therefore, have their *υπόστασις* or instantiation as embroidered decoration on his tablion, but also reflect the transcendent reality of their prototype, the icon of Christ. This is a representation of an obviously different order than the icons or diptychs that Stephen the Younger typically holds, which are clearly designated as material objects of paint on panel. The visual coding of Christ's image in the Menas paintings at once links them to contemporary realities in the practice of court dress in Byzantium and distinguishes the icon of Christ as a transcendent and infinitely replicable prototype, in contrast to the more limited and contingent likeness of the emperor. In short, Byzantine artists place Menas and the image he bears in the realm

of the kingdom of heaven rather than the earthly empire, and they use formal devices to safeguard the distinction between the two realms.

An exception to this dominant mode of the *imago clipeata* for the image of Christ associated with St. Menas may be found on the great bronze doors known as the Porta di S. Clemente, which open from the atrium to the nave of San Marco in Venice. Although the doors bear no dedicatory inscription, comparison with other sets of bronze doors of Byzantine manufacture in Italy places them in the last decades of the eleventh century.⁸⁵ The twenty figures of standing saints, along with images of Christ and the Virgin, two crosses, and four decorative panels, are executed in damascene technique of silver and niello on bronze. Only the figures' hands and faces appear as solid areas of silver, while other areas are engraved and filled with niello or with thin strips of hammered silver. St. Menas appears, as usual, in a long tunic with a decorated border, surmounted by a chlamys bearing an embroidered tablion (fig. 18). The image of Christ, with a face and hand of silver, is clearly visible on his tablion. Because Christ's features on the garment are rendered in the same technique used for the faces of the full figures on the doors, the image transcends the role of ornament. Paradoxically, the silver of St. Menas's face is so abraded that the bust of Christ appears to be the more real image of the two.⁸⁶ Like the *imago clipeata*, the representation on the doors at San Marco suggests that Christ's image has an existence linked to, but not dependent on, its material form.

The careful preservation of this distinction between image and substance appears to fall away in the three examples latest in date, at Sopoćani (fig. 3), St. Nikolaos Orphanos (fig. 19), and Phodele. In all three monuments, the image of Christ appears as an embroidered panel or roundel on the mantle of St. Menas. Jerphanion, comparing the image of St. Menas bearing the *imago clipeata* at Karabaş Kilise with the thirteenth-century fresco at Sopoćani, dismissed the



Fig. 18 St. Menas. Venice, San Marco, Porta di S. Clemente, 11th century (photo after G. Matthiae, *Porte bronzee*, pl. 92)

85 G. Matthiae, *Le porte bronzee bizantine in Italia* (Rome, 1971), 63–65, 83, 101, 106–7; R. Polacco, “Porte ageminate e slatrate in S. Marco a Venezia,” in *Le porte di bronzo dall’antichità al secolo xiii*, ed. S. Salomi (Rome, 1990), 279–85; M. E. Frazer, “Church

Doors and the Gates of Paradise: Byzantine Bronze Doors in Italy,” *DOP* 27 (1973): 152.

86 Matthiae, in fact, mistakes the bust of Christ for “un bambino, evidente allusione alla leggenda della sua nascita”; *Porte bronzee*, 99.



Fig. 19 St. Menas. Church of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, Thessalonike (photo by author)

latter as mere decoration.⁸⁷ Certainly it partakes of certain decorative characteristics: the figure of Christ is composed entirely of shadings of gold color, thus resembling actual products of Palaiologan gold embroidery.⁸⁸ The vine-scroll ornament of the background and the drapery folds of the chlamys that continue through the tablion reinforce the emphatic materiality of the image. If, as I have argued above, the clipeate image was to be understood as the subject adorning Menas's tablion, then these latter examples cannot be dismissed as a case of the artists simply misunderstanding the iconography. But how do we explain the apparent descent into artistic literalism in these later monuments?

⁸⁷ "Caractéristiques et attributs des saints," 317 n. 4 (n. 47 above).

⁸⁸ Cf. the figures of Christ administering communion on the early fourteenth-century Thessalonike Epitaphios, H. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, 2004), 312–13, cat. no. 187A.

Once again, the transformation of the image of Menas has currency in the realities of his imagined imperial context. A more literal interpretation, one that takes into account parallels with contemporary developments, stresses that the image of Christ is the ensign of Menas's allegiance. I am not suggesting that Menas's costume represents dress actually worn at the Palaiologan court, rather that the prominent display of images on costume was part of an increasing emphasis on sartorial displays of power in this period. The fourteenth-century ceremonial manual by pseudo-Kodinos reports the usage of a hat, the *skaranikon*, worn by the upper ranks of Palaiologan courtiers, which bore the imperial portrait in front and behind (fig. 20).⁸⁹ As with the earlier use of patterned silks or embroidered tablia, the emperor's image on the headgear made clear the delegated authority invested in the wearer. The unprecedented visibility of the late Byzantine imperial image, literally surmounting the face of the wearer, is striking.

The interchangeability of the emperor's image with that of Christ, a phenomenon we have noted in the art and coinage of the middle Byzantine period, also began to be exploited by the Church in the later centuries of the empire. Beginning in the late twelfth century and far more by the fourteenth, the costume of the Byzantine clergy frequently bore embroidered images of Christ and the saints. That the two phenomena are related to the hierarchical use of images at court is signaled by John Kantakouzenos, who narrates the events of John V's coronation by the Patriarch John XIV Kalekas:

*The patriarch, since he was not able to change his rank, put on a rather more august habit, and in his signatures he was accustomed to use a sky-blue color, and he adorned the kalyptra upon his head (which is customary for the patriarchs to wear if they are not among the class of monks, made of white linen folded up in front) with gold, having the engraved images of Christ our Savior, and of his immaculate Mother the Theotokos, and John the Baptist.*⁹⁰

89 J. Verpeaux, ed., *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* (Paris, 1966), 152–54. The *skaranikon* with its portrait is clearly shown on the donor, the *megas primikerios* John, of a large icon of Christ Pantokrator in the Hermitage. A. Bank, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums* (Leningrad, 1985), 325–26, pl. 284. It is also worn by Alexios Apokaukos in the frontispiece to the works of Hippocrates, Paris, BN gr. 2144, fol. iir. Evans, *Faith and Power*, 26–27, cat. no. 2.

90 Πατριάρχης δὲ ἐπεὶ τὴν ἀξίαν ἀμείβειν οὐκ ἔνῃν, εἰς σεμνότερόν τι περιέστησε τὸ

σχῆμα· καὶ ἐν τε ταῖς ὑπογραφαῖς, ἡερανέω χρώματι ἐχρήτο, καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς καλύπτραν [sic], ἣν τοὺς πατριάρχας ἔθος φέρειν, ἂν μὴ τοῦ τάγματος ὡσι τῶν μοναζόντων, ὁθόνη λευκῇ περιειλημμένην πρότερον, αὐτὸς κατεκόσμησε χρυσῷ, εἰκόνας αὐτῇ τοῦ τε Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἐγγράψας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῆς τεκούσης αὐτὸν ἀχράντου θεοτόκου, καὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ. *Historia* 3.36, ed. L. Schopen, CSHB 20 (Bonn, 1831), 2:218.

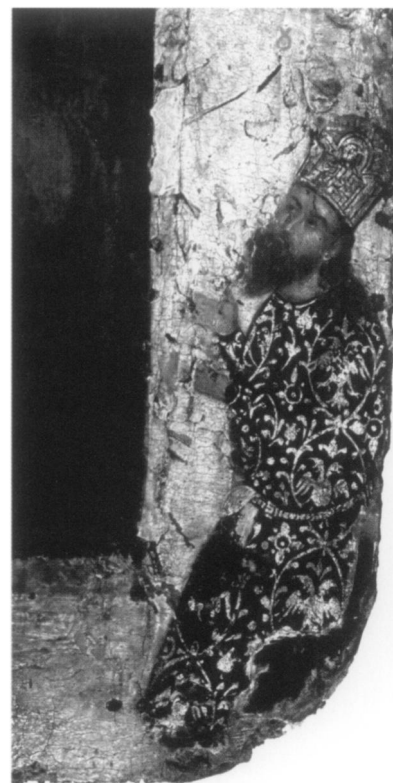


Fig. 20 St. Petersburg, Hermitage, icon of Christ Pantokrator, detail of donor (photo after A. Bank, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums* [Leningrad, 1985], pl. 284, reproduced by permission of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg)

The embroidered image of Christ flanked by the Virgin and John the Baptist on the Patriarch's headgear nicely echoes the *skaranikon* with the imperial portrait flanked by angels as described in pseudo-Kodinos.⁹¹ As Kantakouzenos perceived, the image of Christ worn by the clergy implied the derivation of their authority directly from Christ in a way that tended to elide the distinction between the earthly and heavenly realms. Rather than depending on the emperor as Christ's vicar and image on earth, the clergy symbolically transferred themselves into the kingdom of heaven through the images embroidered on their garments. In so doing, they were merely building on the same exchange of images of the earthly and heavenly βασιλεύς that Menas's image had already articulated.

Ultimately, we cannot answer why St. Menas was first singled out to typify the officer of Christ; the history of his portrait, however, gives insight into the dynamics not only of his own transformation but that of the larger society as well. The middle Byzantine images of St. Menas build on an understanding of how the imperial portrait signified delegated authority granted to, and allegiance pledged from, the bearer. The depictions of Menas transfer this language of power to Christ, who becomes the agent of investiture, but the autonomy of Christ's image is scrupulously preserved, in contrast to the contingency of the emperor's. The elimination of this careful distinction between Christ's image and its substrate in the Palaiologan frescoes of St. Menas reflects the expanding role of such images of allegiance on costume of the period. As actual members of Byzantine society began to wear Christ's image as a sign of their authority, Byzantine artists came to stress the tactile reality of the embroidered icon of Christ on Menas's garments. Whereas earlier images mark Menas as separate from earthly office and authority, the later ones edge closer to aligning him with earthly institutions of church and state. As in contemporary images from both the church and the imperial sphere, the late images of St. Menas indicate how narrow the gap between the earthly and heavenly had become in the Byzantine imagination.⁹²

91 Verpeaux, *Traité des offices*, 152.

92 I am pursuing a larger study focused on the role of art and ritual in expounding mimetic relationships between earthly and heavenly realms in Byzantium. For promising directions in such research, see W. Tronzo, "Mimesis in Byzantium: Notes Toward a History of the Function of the Image," *Res* 25 (1994): 61–76.

Images of St. Menas with the Bust of Christ

1. *Hosios Loukas*, Phokis, northwest chapel of the *katholikon*, first half of the eleventh century (fig. 7)

Although no adjacent inscription survives, the full-length figure of St. Menas can be identified among the other holy warriors in the chapel by his curly gray hair and beard, a less common feature among martyr saints. He wears courtly dress consisting of a long tunic of reddish purple trimmed with gold embroidery and a dull purple chlamys with a dark blue tablion. In his right hand he holds a large cross, over the center of which is superimposed a gold medallion with the bust of Christ. Christ is labeled with the customary abbreviation $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$, and the rays of his *nimbus cruciger* continue into the arms of the cross. St. Menas appears adjacent to St. Theodore Stratelates and in the company of the martyrs Eugenios, Eustratios, Auxentios, and others.⁹³

2. *Karabaş Kilise*, Cappadocia, 1060/61

The church of Karabaş Kilise, in the Soğanlı Valley in Cappadocia, bears the donor inscription of the *protospatharios* Michael Skepides, the nun Catherine, and the monk Niphon. The inscription dates the church to the reign of Constantine X Doukas in the Byzantine year 6569, the fourteenth indiction, i.e., 1060 or 1061 CE.⁹⁴ St. Menas is painted within a niche close to the west door on the south wall of the church. He appears among a company of martyrs, including St. George, St. Demetrios, SS. Pegasios, Elpidophoros, Akindynos, Aphthonios, and Anempodistos as well as with the other martyrs commemorated on his 11 November feast day, SS. Victor and Vikentios. St. Menas appears as an old man with gray hair and beard with a medallion portrait of the head of Christ suspended before his breast.⁹⁵

3. *Mount Sinai Metaphrastian Menologion*, Sinai monastery library 500, ca. 1063 (fig. 6)

The Sinai Metaphrastian menologion, containing the saints' lives for early November, is the third volume from what was once a ten-volume set covering the entire liturgical year.⁹⁶ The final volume of the set (Moscow, cod. Hist. Mus. gr. 382) contains a colophon dating

93 K. Skawran, *The Development of Middle Byzantine Fresco Painting in Greece* (Pretoria, 1982), 49, fig. 75. Chatzidakis, "Particularités iconographiques," 89–92, fig. 2 (n. 21 above); eadem, *Peintures murales*, 70–74, pls. 7–8 (n. 44 above); eadem, *Ὁσίου Λουκάς* (Athens, 1996), fig. 52, 56–58.

94 Jerphanion, *Églises rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1936), 2:334–35; M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* (Shannon, Ireland, 1969), 1:162–69.

95 Jerphanion, *Églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, 2:337; idem, "Caractéristiques," 317 n. 4 (n. 47 above).

96 Ševčenko, *Metaphrastian Menologion*, 65; Weitzmann and Galavaris, *Sinai Greek Manuscripts*, 73–74, 76–77 (both n. 25 above). A folio from this manuscript is preserved at St. Petersburg, GPB gr. 373, fol. 129v.

the completion of the work to April 1063.⁹⁷ On folio 129v of Sinai 500, the three saints commemorated jointly on 11 November—SS. Viktor, Menas, and Vikentios—appear within a rectangular frame under their inscriptions. All three saints wear long tunics with decorated hems, over which they wear the chlamys fastened on the (proper) right shoulder, and all three carry crosses as symbols of their martyrdom. Menas, in the center, is distinguished from his companions by his gray hair and beard. While the flanking saints hold tall, narrow crosses, Menas's cross is shorter and has broader arms. This allows the head of Christ, which appears in the center of the cross, to fall on the tablion of his tunic. The image is thus ambiguous. Are we seeing a cross decorated with a medallion image of Christ or, rather, an image of Christ on Menas's tablion showing through the cross? Whichever is the case, the martyr's cross doubles as the *nimbus cruciger* of Christ.

4. *Porta di S. Clemente*, Church of San Marco, Venice, late eleventh century (fig. 18)

The *Porta di S. Clemente*, within the atrium of the basilica of San Marco, consists of bronze doors damascened with silver and niello in a technique known in Italy as *ageminature*. The damascened panels are close in style to those in the bronze doors at Amalfi, dated between 1060 and 1065, and to those at Monte S. Angelo, dated by inscription to 1076; they seem to have inspired, in turn, the central doors of San Marco commissioned by Leo da Molino after his elevation to the office of procurator in 1112.⁹⁸ Of the surviving bronze doors in Italy, it is the most purely Byzantine in its iconography. The seven rows of four panels each, framed by decoratively engraved surrounds, feature twenty standing saints with Greek inscriptions, the Virgin and Christ, crosses, and four panels of textile-derived animal motifs.⁹⁹ Menas appears in the third row from the bottom, accompanying SS. Peter, Matthew, and Luke; his original position was more likely alongside the other warrior saints.¹⁰⁰ He wears a long tunic with a broad, decorative border at the hem. His cloak bears a tablion in which the bust of Christ appears; like the full figures, Christ's face and hands are rendered in silver. Menas carries a cross, also silver, in his right hand.

97 Ševčenko, *Metaphrastian Menologion*, 62; Weitzmann and Galavaris, *Sinai Greek Manuscripts*, 78.

98 Matthiae, *Porte bronzee*, 63–65, 83, 101, 106–7; Polacco, “Porte ageminate e slatrate,” 279–85; Frazer, “Church Doors,” 152 (suggesting a date ca. 1080 for the *Porta*

di S. Clemente; both n. 85 above).

99 B. and F. Forlati, V. Federici, *Le porte bizantine di San Marco* (Venice, 1969), 17.

100 Frazer, “Church Doors,” 152, n. 27.

5. *Church of St. Panteleimon, Nerezi, 1164*

This church, dated by its well-known dedicatory inscription of *kyr* Alexios Komnenos to September 1164, contains frescoes of SS. Menas, Viktor, and Vikentios in its northwest chapel. While his companions are shown framed as if they were wooden icons, Menas is accorded a full wall for his orant pose. Once again, he displays the tightly curled gray hair and rounded beard seen elsewhere, and wears court dress consisting of a gold-embroidered red tunic and a blue chlamys. A medallion bust of Christ floats freely before the saint's abdomen.¹⁰¹

6. *Church of H. Nikolaos tou Kasnitzi, Kastoria, late twelfth century (fig. 16)*

The date of this church is disputed. Pelikanides' initial publication of the frescoes placed it in the eleventh century; Chatzidakis, in revising and supplementing Pelikanides' text, described the frescoes as roughly contemporaneous with Nerezi. Consensus seems to have settled on a date in the latter half of the twelfth century.¹⁰² St. Menas is shown on the north wall as a half-length orant figure within a square frame. He is gray haired and bearded, as usual, and arrayed in a blue mantle over a red tunic with gold-ornamented cuffs. The image of Christ (inscribed $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$) appears on a large green medallion floating before his chest. SS. Theodore, Eustratios, and other military saints appear nearby.¹⁰³

7. *Church of the Ascension, Mileševa, ca. 1222–28 (fig. 17)*

Vojislav Djurić dates the frescoes of Mileševa to before 1228.¹⁰⁴ There, St. Menas appears on the south wall at the west end of the naos along with SS. Hermogenes and Eugraphos.¹⁰⁵ Menas, as usual, has curly gray hair and rounded beard. He holds a martyr's cross in his right hand, while the medallion bust of Christ floats on his chlamys just below his hands.¹⁰⁶

8. *Church of the Trinity, Sopoćani, ca. 1265 (fig. 3)*

The frescoes at Sopoćani are dated between 1263 and 1268 by the historical indications of the dedicatory inscription.¹⁰⁷ St. Menas appears again as an older man with gray curly hair and a rounded gray

101 I. Sinkević, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture, Programme, Patronage* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 72–73, 182, fig. 72.

102 S. Pelikanides, *Καστοριά, Βυζαντινά τοιχογραφία* (Thessalonike, 1953); S. Pelikanides and M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria* (Athens, 1985), 56–58. A date near the end

of the twelfth century is favored by T. Malmquist, *Byzantine 12th Century Frescoes in Kastoria* (Uppsala, 1979), 108–9.

103 Pelikanides and Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, 56–59, pl. 10; Skawran, *Development*, 170, pl. 238 (n. 93 above).

104 *Byzantinische Fresken*, 47 (n. 35 above).

105 This is the only instance known to me

in which the icon-bearing St. Menas appears with the other martyrs of 10 December.

106 B. Živković, *Mileševa* (Belgrade, 1992), 27; S. Radojčić, *Mileševa* (Belgrade, 1963), 79, fig. 10.

107 Djurić, *Sopoćani*, 26–27 (n. 4 above).

beard. He wears a tunic of aquamarine ornamented with broad gold-embroidered bands. In his right hand, he holds a large cross that is incised rather than painted, rendering it effectively transparent. The rectangular tablion on his rose-colored tunic is nearly filled by a half-length figure of Christ, the latter with a roll in left hand and blessing with the right.¹⁰⁸ The bust of Christ is rendered so that it appears to be gold-embroidered decoration. Except for the face, hair, and scroll, Christ is rendered in shades of the same gold as the tablion itself.

9. *Church of the Virgin*, Manastir, 1271

A Greek inscription gives the original dedication of the building to St. Nikolaos, its date of construction in 1095, and the date of the fresco decoration in 1271, under Michael VIII Palaiologos.¹⁰⁹ St. Menas appears as a half-length figure in the second register of frescoes. His face features the usual tight gray curls and the rounded beard. He wears a chlamys symmetrically fastened at the neck with a jeweled brooch. A medallion image of Christ is centered over the two semi-circular tablia on its front, as though floating between the garment and the extended hands of the saint. Despite its position, the image does not appear as embroidered decoration on the tablion itself, but as a sort of apparition before the saint's chest. The presence of SS. Viktor and Vikentios confirm Menas's identity as the saint commemorated on 11 November.¹¹⁰

10. *Icon of SS. Menas, Viktor, and Vikentios*, Larnaka, Cyprus, bishopric of Kition, second half of the thirteenth century.

The small (32 by 23 cm) icon on wooden panel is somewhat decayed, with losses around the panel's edges and a large section of missing paint surface near the center of the icon. No inscriptions survive to identify the three standing saints, but the central figure is recognizable as Menas by his facial type (curly gray hair and rounded gray beard) and by the clipeus with the bust of Christ (labeled IC XC) that he holds with both hands before his chest. His younger companions, one bearded, the other clean shaven, hold crosses. They are presumed to represent SS. Viktor and Vikentios. While the icon has been ascribed to the tenth century, it is more likely a product of a local thirteenth-century workshop.¹¹¹

108 Ibid., *Sopoćani*, 125, pl. LIII; idem, *Byzantinische Fresken*, pl. XXVIII; B. Živković, *Sopoćani* (Belgrade, 1984), 13.

109 D. Koco and P. Miljković-Peppek, *Manastir* (Skopje, 1958), 8–14.

110 Koco and Miljković-Peppek, *Manastir*, 54–55, fig. 57.

111 S. Sophocleous, *Icons of Cyprus: 7th–20th Century* (Nicosia, 1994), 76, pl. 3. K. Gerasimou, K. Papaioakeim, and Ch. Spanou, eds., *Η κατά Κίτιον αγιογραφική τέχνη* (Larnaka, 2002), 43–44, 132. I thank Annemarie Weyl Carr for bringing this icon to my attention.

11. *Church of St. George, Ortaköy, Cappadocia, late thirteenth century*

The fresco decoration of the masonry triconch church of St. George at Ortaköy is poorly preserved and difficult to date precisely. Nevertheless, the narthex preserves three tombs with painted epitaphs dating to 1292/93, which date conforms to the general characteristics of the painting and architecture.¹¹² The image of St. Menas is found on the west wall of the northern arm, beneath another (unidentified) warrior saint; he is accompanied by several healing saints, including SS. Cosmas and Damian. Here, once again, the image of Christ appears as a medallion before the chest of the saint.¹¹³

12. *Church of St. Nikolaos Orphanos, Thessalonike, early fourteenth century (fig. 19)*

The church of St. Nikolaos Orphanos and its frescoes are usually dated to the 1310s.¹¹⁴ The figure of St. Menas appears on the west side of the double arcade that separates the nave from the north aisle. He occupies the west side of the intrados of the arch, opposite the seated figure of St. Mark the Evangelist. The intrados of the adjacent arch is occupied by St. Viktor and the Evangelist Matthew. While both saints commemorated on 11 November wear aristocratic dress, St. Menas wears his dark blue chlamys fastened at the center of his neck, much like the courtiers attending the emperor in Paris MS Coislin 79, fol. 2r.¹¹⁵ Its two tablia are semicircular and bordered with circular dabs of white paint representing pearls. The bust of Christ, rendered in shades of gold as though embroidered on the cloak, occupies the (proper) right tablion; the other is vacant.¹¹⁶

13. *Church of the Panagia at Phodele, Crete, 1323*

The Church of the Panagia at Phodele, in the province of Herakleion, preserves multiple phases of construction and painted decoration. St. Menas is here located in the south arm of the cruciform nave, on a layer of fresco dated by inscription to 1323. He stands adjacent to the

112 Jerphanion, *Églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, 2:240–45 (n. 95 above); C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), 253 and n. 20.

113 Jolivet-Lévy, *Églises byzantines de Cappadoce*, 251–52. Christopher Walter characterizes the figure as Menas Καλλικέλαδος and describes the Christ image as “a cross with a medallion of Christ at the centre,” a description that does not appear in Jolivet-Lévy’s publication. Walter,

Warrior Saints, 187 (n. 19 above).

114 A. Tsitouridou, *Ο ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος του Αγίου Νικολάου Όρφανού στη Θεσσαλονίκη* (Thessalonike, 1986), 28–30.

115 J. Durand, ed., *Byzance: L’art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 360.

116 C. Mavropoulou-Tsioumi, *The Church of St. Nicholas Orphanos* (Thessalonike, 1986), 44; Tsitouridou, *Ζωγραφικός διάκοσμος*, 193–94, pl. 86; Xyngopoulos, *Τοιχογραφίες*, 22, fig. 133 (n. 38 above).

figure of St. Anne holding the Virgin, and he is not associated with other martyrs. As at Sopoćani, the saint wears a rose-colored mantle bearing a gold, rectangular tablion with the figure of Christ pictured as though gold-embroidered on its surface.¹¹⁷

I would like to thank a number of scholars for their help and input. Lois Drewer, Deborah Brown, Alice-Mary Talbot, and Annemarie Weyl Carr all helped in tracking down depictions of St. Menas. Henry Maguire and Elizabeth Bolman, as well as the two anonymous readers for *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, contributed helpful comments and suggestions on the draft of this article. I also thank those who aided me in securing photographs and permissions: The Byzantine Fieldwork and Photo Archives at Dumbarton Oaks, Sarah Brooks, Gudrun Bühl, Helen Evans, Smiljka Gabelić, Lindsay Koval, Yuri Piatnitsky, and Nancy Ševčenko. I am grateful to the Penn Humanities Forum at the University of Pennsylvania for the postdoctoral fellowship that gave me enviable conditions for the research and writing of this article.

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117 M. Bissinger, *Kreta: Byzantinische Wandmalerei*, Münchener Arbeiten zur Kunstgeschichte und Archäologie 4 (Munich, 1995), 106, pl. 4; I. Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete* (Leiden, 2001), 67; K. Gallas, K. Wessel, and M. Borboudakis, *Byzantisches Kreta* (Munich, 1983), 353, figs. 307, 308.